2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

neglect neither his sorority-group nor the husbands in his village,[1] that his sorority-group and his village were his garden and he must take care of the young plants in it. The husbands were the watchmen who look after the women in the village. A headman dare not take sides or be unfair, nor must he talk behind people's backs. He must take care to settle differences amicably by discussion at meetings. They advised him not to pay too much attention to his wives who may have quarrelled with his sisters and tell him that they have been insulting him. When he hears a report like that he may be unfair to his sisters and people will say that he has broken his village through listening to nonsense. This sort of instruction went on through the night.

On Friday when the beer was brewed, Mlamba and Mbalwe, both headmen and perpetual sons of Nyambi, came to the village and told the men to build a small grass shed for the successor to sit in. This the men did, and the women were told to plaster it and clean the huts out for the strangers who would be coming to the ceremony. On Saturday morning before cockcrow, Makoka and Ncimba got up and told the women to cook a big pot of porridge because they were taking Cimombo to bathe and when they returned they would want to find porridge ready. Makoka took some medicine called *mbulumo* in a bark container (*likungwa*) into the toilet enclosure. He put the medicine into two jars of water and told Cimombo to wash himself in it daily as he was an important headman, and it would strengthen his body.[2] After Cimombo had washed he went back into the hut where a mat was spread on the floor and on it were a dish of porridge and three dishes of relish. Makoka and Ncimbo told him to take a little porridge, dip it into one of the relishes—whichever he chose—and eat it. Cimombo did so. They did not tell him that one of the dishes contained human flesh.[3] When he tried the dish of human flesh he vomited and all the villagers cried with joy, saying that he was a good chief because he had

[1] *Mlumba jao ni shamwisi wao*—the meaning and significance of this in the village context is explained on p. 183.

[2] This is a euphemism for protective medicine against sorcery.

[3] The immediate question is: Where did the human flesh come from? No informant could tell me and I am inclined to believe that one of the dishes is 'ritually' made into human flesh for this ceremony. This special ceremony was always spoken about as if it were secret, especially from White people.